You have four hours to complete the exam. Choose TWO questions to answer.

1. "The Populists of the 1890s failed because they could not form an effective political coalition with urban workers and labor reformers." Is this true? What other explanations are there for the Populists' disappearance, and how much weight should we give other explanations? What weight should we give, specifically, to demographic trends, racism, and the resources (including the political experience and intelligence) of the Populists' enemies?

2. Richard White has called the West during the last quarter of the 19th century the "kindergarten of the state." Describe the various ways in which the newly configured American state, emerging after the Civil War, expanded and tested its power in the West. In your discussion include economic development, land policy, Indian relations, science and exploration, and any other area you think is relevant.

3. One revisionist historian argued his case by saying "the bombing of Hiroshima was not the last act of World War II but the first act of the Cold War." This statement is full of different assumptions and implications. What are they, and, in light of all the scholarship of the last 60-odd years, is the revisionist interpretation of Hiroshima generally wrong or generally right?
Maggie Weber
Rural History

Please answer TWO of the following questions (approximately 2 hours per question).

1. Family, community, consumerism and the market are all key concepts in recent writing about American farmers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Critically evaluate the use and usefulness of these terms in achieving the fullest possible understanding of rural life during that period of American history.

2. Discuss the most fundamental changes in American agricultural and rural life in the period from the Civil War to World War II. How has technology, science, and government policy affected farming and rural life? What have been the most important developments? Why?

3. You have been asked to teach History 468, History of Rural America. What 4 or 5 central themes do you plan to emphasize in this course? Why? What readings would you assign in order to best illustrate these themes?
Maria Howe
Preliminary Examination
Colonial America - 1877

Please answer two of the following:

1. In his seminal book, *The American Jeremiad*, Sacvan Bercovitch argues that a distinctive American religious and political tradition exists linking John Winthrop to Abraham Lincoln. In other words, he thought that the persistent belief that Americans were a people chosen by God yet persistently unable to live up to their covenant with Him shapes colonial and national history. How has this view influenced American scholars? Do you see this as a persuasive interpretation of American history? (Cite other historiography to justify your position.)

2. How much can Bernard Bailyn's argument about radical republicanism—and other historians' elaboration on this theme--serve to explain the course of nineteenth-century American history (through Reconstruction)?

3. American historians recognize that US society was transformed in the mid-nineteenth century. Which played a greater role: the so-called "market revolution" which ushered in capitalist relations or the American Civil War which emancipated southern slaves? Please evaluate how scholars have developed arguments in favor of the salience of each of these perspectives.

4. In a 2003 essay on historians' search for "agency" in the past, Walter Johnson complains: "By applying the jargon of self-determination and choice to the historical condition of civil objectification and choicelessness, historians have, not surprisingly, ended up in a mess." (Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* (Fall 2003): 115.)

Drawing on the historiography of the United States from the colonial era through 1877, evaluate Johnson's complaint. How have historians dealt with the issue of agency in American history? In what ways have they succeeded or fallen short?

5. Historians of the United States recognize that one of the central developments in the nineteenth-century was the making of an American working class. Please trace the major steps in this process with regard to race, class, ethnicity, and gender. Should we see this process as focused on the development of human freedom or does it reflect a growing problem of immiseration and oppression?
Exam Questions – Post-Civil War America
Maria Howe
August 2014

Answer two of the following questions. You will have a total of four hours to write your answers.

1. Account for the depopulation of the agricultural countryside from the end of the Civil War to the present.

2. You have been assigned to teach a course covering U.S. history from 1900 to 1945, and are working on your syllabus. What 4 or 5 central themes do you plan to emphasize in this course? Why? What readings would you assign in order to best illustrate these themes?

3. What was Progressivism? Give us the who, what, when, where and why, and explain how you would make this understandable to undergraduates.

4. The Great Depression and New Deal enabled fundamental change in agricultural and rural life. What was the intent of this policy? Describe and analyze the programs that directly or indirectly affected agriculture and rural life. Do they fit a consistent pattern or were there contradictions and friction points? Was New Deal agricultural policy a success or failure?
Choose THREE questions to answer. You have four hours to complete the exam.

1. Much of environmental history is about the human attempt to control (or have power over) the environment. Discuss some examples. Is this an appropriate approach or does it limit the historian's ability to explain the ongoing "conversation" between humans and their environment? Should environmental historians try and move beyond the "control" framework?

2. One of the goals of environmental historians is to integrate the environment into the standard narrative, thus making it a "full participant" in history. Using U.S. history as an example, how successful have historians been? What mainstream topics (for example, the Columbian Exchange) are "evidence" that environmental historians, working over the past 30 years or so, have been successful with their goal? In other words, how has U.S. history changed because of environmental history? What other work remains?

3. Environmental historian Hal Rothman has argued that "in many ways, environmental history is western history" while Elliott West has claimed that environmental history "grounds western history." Use pertinent literature to describe and assess the link between these two fields.

4. In his famous article, "The Trouble With Wilderness," William Cronon argued that "wilderness represents a flight from history." What did he mean by that? How has interpretation of the wilderness changed through the historiography? How did the old focus on wilderness influence the larger emerging field of environmental history? Did wilderness hold environmental history back?
Legal History
Questions for Maria Howe
Please answer 2 out of 3.

1. Describe a proposed undergraduate course in American legal history. How would you organize the material? What themes would you emphasize? If you are giving students cases, which ones would you select? Pick one case and describe what you would like students to learn from it.

2. How do legal historians view the transition from the Progressive era to the New Deal era? What are the major legal landmarks in each era? What do legal historians disagree on in each period? What insights would you recommend other historians learn from the legal history of each period?

3. How has scholarship on property law changed in response to different trends in legal thought over the past 150 years? Or, to put it another way, how has our view of property law history reflected trends in legal academia and broader historical scholarship? Describe a representative scholar for each school of thought.
Matt Margis  
Environmental History Exam (Courtwright)  
April 28, 2014

You have four hours to write this exam. Choose THREE of the following to answer.

1. How does environmental history relate to environmentalism? (Or does it?). What does the environmental historian have to teach the environmentalist?

2. In his famous article, “The Trouble With Wilderness,” William Cronon argued that “wilderness represents a flight from history.” What did he mean by that? How has interpretation of the wilderness changed through the historiography? How did the old focus on wilderness influence the larger emerging field of environmental history? Did wilderness hold environmental history back?

3. Donald Worster has said that the goal of environmental historians is to place nature as a “full participant” in history. Given the literature you have read concerning United States environmental history, how successful do you believe historians have been? How has U.S. history changed because of environmental history? What work do you believe remains to be done?

4. If asked to teach environmental history at the college or university level, how would you organize your course? What books would you assign, and what themes would you cover?
Field Exam Questions for Matt Margis

U.S. History– Amy Bix

Choose 2 out of the following questions – do not do all!

1. Design a syllabus that you would like to use to teach a 15-week-long undergraduate survey class in post-Civil War U.S. History. Define a major topic (or themes) for each week of the course and discuss why you think these are valuable. Explain in depth what books you would use (and why), plus the broader teaching philosophy behind your course. Then, pick one week in the late 1800s, one week in the US pre-1945, and one week post-1945. For each week, explain how you might bring in historiography and primary sources or other teaching material, and how you would encourage students to develop their critical-thinking skills here.

2. Discuss some of the major changes, issues, and tensions in American economic life from the late 1800s through the Depression era. Explain how the history of business/labor/economic concerns connects to and helps us understand larger themes in the context of American social, political, and intellectual history. Illustrate by drawing on specific examples from your readings.

3. In trying to cover a lot of ground briefly, people often wind up summarizing an entire decade in one phrase – for example, the 1950s as a time of stability and consensus, in contrast to the 1960s as a period of protest, chaos, and pessimism. To what extent are such generalizations valid, and how should we challenge or complicate this view? Illustrate by drawing on specific examples from your readings.

4. Review the shifting landscape of “democracy” in the twentieth-century – did “democracy” mean different things in different eras or to different people? What groups were included/excluded in the political system at different times, how did that change over the decades, and why?
Matt Margis
Comprehensive Exam Questions
Pre-1865 U.S.  Dr. Bremer

Answer two of the following: (You have four hours total)

1. Charles Sellers' *The Market Revolution* makes a controversial argument about the role of capitalism in antebellum America. Explain the strengths and weaknesses of this interpretation (both factually and historiographically.)

2. How revolutionary was the American Revolution? How did life change—or not change—in the United States in the decades after the war?

3. The past fifty years has seen tremendous interpretative change in American history, especially in the history of marginalized groups—i.e., race, class and gender. Choose one or more of these categories and explain how this is reflected in the history and historiography for the period from the colonial period to the Civil War.
Questions for Matt Margis

American Military History - Prof. Tim Wolters

Please answer question #1, #2a or #2b, and #3:

1. You have received a tenure-track job at Midwestern State University and the department chair wants you to teach a one-semester, upper-level course in American Military History (a typical reading load in upper-level history classes at the school is 5-7 books). Identify where you will begin and where you will end the course, explaining your reasoning. After so doing, articulate the major course themes you will cover (e.g., civil-military relations). Finally, list the books you will assign and explain your reasons for choosing them.

2a. The United States began the nineteenth century embroiled in a maritime war with France and ended it with a maritime war against Spain. In between there were, of course, numerous other conflicts as well. Discuss the causes and consequences of the major nineteenth century American wars, outlining the basic historiographic debates surrounding at least three of those conflicts.

2b. In the eyes of many the United States arrived as a major world power with the defeat of Spain in 1898. Over the next half-century the U.S. had more military successes than defeats, but then came Korea and Vietnam. Discuss the causes and consequences of each major U.S. conflict from 1898 to 1975, addressing the basic historiographic debates surrounding at least three of those conflicts.

3. Over the past forty years historians have shifted away from “guns and trumpets” battle narratives to the “new military history.” Drawing from some of the best work of this new genre, discuss how the experience of military service in America has changed over the past three centuries. Be sure to include issues of class, race, gender, and memory in your answer.
Exam Questions – Post-Civil War America
Kelly Wenig
April 2012

Answer two of the following questions:

1. Account for the depopulation of the agricultural countryside from the end of the Civil War to the present.

2. It is generally agreed that the U.S. began to act as a world power with the Spanish American war. What are the primary turning points in the American understanding of the nation’s place in the world order, 1898-1945? What changes, and why?

3. You have been assigned to teach a course covering U.S. history from 1900 to 1945 and are working on your syllabus. What 4 or 5 central themes do you plan to emphasize in this course? Why? What readings would you assign in order to best illustrate these themes?

4. You have been assigned to teach a course covering U.S. history from 1945 to the present and are working on your syllabus. What 4 or 5 central themes do you plan to emphasize in this course? Why? What readings would you assign in order to best illustrate these themes?
Comprehensive Exam: United States
Colonial - 1877
April 2012

Part I
a. Create a syllabus for a course on the History of Colonial and Early America to 1789. The course should be pitched to upper level students at a liberal arts college. In other words, the course should be reading and discussion intensive.

b. Provide a historiographical justification for the syllabus you’ve devised. Please explain the major themes and issues you have decided to address.

Part II
Drawing on your intensive reading of early to mid nineteenth-century United States historiography, please assess the following broad synthesizes. How effective are these interpretations at explaining the major themes, events, and issues of the time period? Is there a better interpretive framework for understanding the American early republic and antebellum periods?

• Charles Sellers, The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846
• Sean Wilentz, Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln
• David Walker Howe, What God Hath Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848
• William Freehling, The Road to Disunion, vols. 1 & 2
• David M. Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861
• Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson
Environmental History Field Exam for Kelly Wenig
April 5, 2012
Julie Courtwright

CHOOSE THREE of the following to answer.

1. Environmental history is a relatively new field that emerged out of the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Still, some historians in earlier eras engaged the environment as a part of historical study. What important work was done before the field emerged? How did the field’s growth out of a political movement affect its development and current historiography?

2. Donald Worster has said that the goal of environmental historians is to place nature as a “full participant” in history. Given the literature you have read concerning United States environmental history, how successful do you believe historians have been? How has U.S. history changed because of environmental history? What work do you believe remains to be done?

3. Environmental historian Hal Rothman has argued that “in many ways, environmental history is western history” while Elliott West has claimed that environmental history “grounds western history.” Use pertinent literature to describe and assess the link between these two fields.

4. Is the “pristine myth” still something with which environmental historians must contend? Are we still fighting it? Define the term (using the appropriate literature) and debate the question.
Kelly Wenig Orals Question (Cities and Modernity, part 2)

In addition to the questions posed by Dr. Andrews, please answer the following question:

The concepts of “the modern” and “modernity” are key themes in historical scholarship. Theorists of “modernity” tend to present it as a quintessentially urban phenomenon, and often use conceptions of urban experience as the justification for their specific ideas of what “modernity” entails. Describe the primary conceptions of “modernity” you have encountered in your reading for this field. How do the writers who developed these conceptions draw on urban experience? Which city or cities were the most “modern,” according to the theorists and historians you have read? Why? How does a writer’s choice of “typical” city shape the vision of “modernity” he or she presents?
Ph.D. Written/Oral Exam - Fourth Examination Field – ½ Field, Spring 2012

½ Field Title: Modernity and Metropolis in Europe and Eurasia (Theory, Case Studies, and Practice), 1900-Present

Examiner: Dr. James T. Andrews
Ph.D. Candidate: Kelly Wenig, Department of History, ISU

Answer Two of Three Questions Below For Written Exam:

1) Within the multi-variegated frameworks & perspectives on city building and architectural planning in the twentieth century, analysts have noticed a dichotomy between what some critics such as James Scott call “authoritarian high modernism” on one pole (a tendency toward a legible, synoptic approach) versus a view of city life from the ground level that is more eclectic, if not at times “illegible.” Using a variety of critics, explain these perspectives and cite scholars, or urban schools, who navigate between these contours.

2) Historians of Europe and Eurasia have used a variety of methodological approaches to understand how everyday people navigated modernity and urbanization. Citing historians such as Peter Fritzche who analyses the press, those such as Steven Kotkin who look at the cultural history of showcase cities, or Gyan Prakash’s eclectic viewpoints, explain a variety of historical frameworks to judge citizens’ agency in “becoming modern, urbane individuals.”

3) Though the city in modern history is a unique entity, and in sharp contrast to rural environments, urban historians still conduct “local histories” of sitespecific areas. Sometimes these studies even come under the rubric of a neo-environmental history of the urban setting. Citing some sources delineated in your reading list, and outside readings if you choose that may also be applicable, what are the challenges of doing local history? In some geopolitical contexts, as Donald J. Raleigh suggests in Provincial Landscapes, a focus on the central state’s role in urbanization can obscure the complexity and uniqueness of the locale. Therefore, elaborate on, and evaluate on your own terms, this issue citing relevant readings.
Comprehensive Exam: United States, Colonial - 1877
February 2011

Part I
a. Create a syllabus for a course on the History of Colonial and Early America to 1789. The course should be pitched to upper level students at a liberal arts college. In other words, the course should be reading and discussion intensive.

b. Provide a historiographical justification for the syllabus you’ve devised. Please explain the major themes and issues you have decided to address.

Part II
Drawing on your intensive reading of early to mid nineteenth-century United States historiography, please assess the following broad syntheses. How effective are these interpretations at explaining the major themes, events, and issues of the time period? Is there a better interpretive framework for understanding the American early republic and antebellum periods?

- Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846*
- Sean Wilentz, *Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*
- David Walker Howe, *What God Hath Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*
- William Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, vols. 1 & 2
- David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*
- Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson*
1. Discuss the major developments in feminist and queer theory and how these theories shaped the historical study of the family. As a coda, please discuss in a few pages your own theoretical framework and how this has influenced your particular study.

2. Single women evoke fear from all quarters. Discuss various constructions of single womanhood (including but not limited to widows, prostitutes, women of means, and laborers) and the anxieties they produce among their respective communities.
Exam Questions – Post-Civil War America
Rachel Kleinschmidt
February 2011

Answer two of the following questions:

1. Account for the depopulation of the agricultural countryside from the end of the Civil War to the present.

2. You have been assigned to teach History 222, and are working on your syllabus. What 4 or 5 central themes do you plan to emphasize in this course? Why? What readings would you assign in order to best illustrate these themes?

3. A prominent American historian once argued that because American women and the American family, as understood by most Americans, were “at odds,” and that it was only when the American family had been radically changed would there be true liberation for American women. Do you think this assessment is correct, or not? Explain.

4. It is generally agreed that the U.S. began to act as a world power with the Spanish American war. What main points would you make about the development of American attitudes toward the world order and its place in it, 1898-1945?

5. Although women’s historians with an urban bent often don’t recognize it, rural women’s history and women’s history in the post-Civil War often follow a very different trajectory. Define and discuss the primary differences between mainstream and rural women’s history within U.S. history, 1865 to the present. Is there a point at which these stories converge?
Questions for Rachel Kleinschmidt

Please write two essays, one addressing the question in Area I, and another addressing one of the questions in Area II.

I. General medieval history:

The European Middle Ages are regularly defined as the period from roughly 500 to 1500. Internally, the period is typically subdivided into three parts: early, high, and late. These divisions generally define how courses in the period are structured. Yet they are also the focus of continual revision, or attempted revisions. In thinking about how you would teach a general course on this period, consider and evaluate all these divisions – where you would start and stop the course, how you would divide it internally, and how you would justify these divisions, characterize them, present them to students, etc. If time permits, you might also want to consider the implied boundary of “Europe”; that is, would you include a more global perspective? (Don’t worry if there isn’t enough time to get to this last point.)

II. Women and gender:

Joan Kelly once famously asked “did women have a Renaissance?” One might also ask (with rather different intent): did women have a Middle Ages? From a practical level, given the many centuries a course on medieval women might cover, and the many social groups that would be included (peasants, nobles, and those pursuing the religious life), how would you justify a course on medieval women and/or medieval women as a scholarly field? Via certain experiences common to all women? Certain source-based or methodological issues? Certain theoretical approaches or frameworks? Others?

Barbara Newman, in From Virile Woman to WomanChrist, notes that misogyny is an ever-present “ground base” in the history of medieval women, or at least in the vast majority of the sources for that history, yet she wants to tune out that noise as much as possible and concentrate on other aspects of her story (here religious history). Judith Bennett, in Ale, Beer, and Brewsters, by contrast, seeks to overturn a general historical view that sees the Middle Ages as a “golden age” for women before the increased patriarchy of the early modern period. How would you address, evaluate, and perhaps strike a balance between these two implied schools of medieval women’s history: a “lacrimose” school that emphasizes misogyny and repression, and a “golden age” school?

The study of medieval women’s religion comprises a major sub-set of medieval women’s history. Compare scholarship on women’s religion to that on women’s (generally laywomen’s) economic and social life. Do they present entirely distinct, perhaps even conflicting, pictures of women’s life, or do they ultimately complement one another?
Exam Questions for Sara Egge
Post-1865 U.S. History
From Charles M. Dobbs

Please answer one of the essays in each grouping, that is, Letter A, B, C, and D, for a total of four essays in the four hours available for the examination. Thank you.

A.
1. Write an essay about late 19th century industrialization. What roles did railroads play? What were other key sectors? How much of this industrial transformation resulted from development of new technologies? How much from improved use of existing technologies? How much resulted from changes in what Alfred Chandler titled “strategy and structure?”
2. Write an essay about Progressivism. In your essay, describe the origins of the movement, its beginnings at the local level, its move to the state level and then the national level. Discuss goals and achievements, shortcomings, and lasting impact. Be sure to include Wiebe’s argument.

B.
3. Write an essay about the 1920s in America. Popular histories, e.g., Frederick Lewis Allen’s Only Yesterday, talk about the so-called Roaring Twenties. What was there to the 1920s that seem to justify this view? At the same time there were real changes taking place in America’s cities and in the countryside, in politics and economics, etc. Write an essay that considers the decade perhaps from the top-down and then the bottom-up or how the two sides of the 1920s existed alongside one another.
4. Write an essay about American life in the Great Depression. First, discuss the extent of the economic impact. Then consider the harder to quantify social and personal impact of the depression. Finally, how did most Americans survive the 1930s?

C.
5. Write an essay about America in the immediate postwar years and consider the impact of the origins of the Cold War and the beginnings of the baby boom generation. How did they affect politics, the economy, the society, and even American culture?
6. Write an essay about the 1950s in America. To some, it seemed the Eisenhower decade; that is, a decade of economic prosperity, family formation, the rise of suburbia, the spread of television, etc. But under the surface there certainly were issues and injustice in America. How would you present this decade in a one hour survey lecture in class?
D.

7. The Vietnam War seemed to starkly divide American society across a generation and between generations; it also seemed representative of other societal divides including the Civil Rights movement, the Women’s Movement, etc. What was the impact of the Vietnam War on America in the 1960s and 1970s? How much of its impact was confined to the generation that fought the conflict and hence its impact has been fading each decade since the conflict ended in 1975?

8. In 1987, 20th Century Fox released the movie, *Wall Street*, in which Michael Douglas won an Academy Award for portraying unscrupulous corporate raider Gordon Gekko. He rather famously told an audience that “greed is good.” Director Oliver Stone was obviously seeking to condemn the ethic of the era. Okay. Write an essay about life in Ronald Reagan’s America and agree or disagree with Stone and back up your argument.

Thank you. Good luck.
Questions for Sara Egge

Field Exam for Latin American History

Please answer two of the following questions.

1. Trace the development of gender as a category for historical analysis. Specifically address the extent to which the work carried out by U.S. historians writing on gender in U.S. history have influenced the ways that histories of gender for Latin America have been written. What have been some of the most noted reactions by scholars from Latin America and/or the Third World to this significant body of primarily U.S.-produced scholarship? How have these debates informed your current line of research and its potential significance?

2. Develop a syllabus for an upper-level undergraduate history seminar on gender and state formation in Latin America (colonial through modern periods). How would you approach the complex ways gender was intimately intertwined in processes of colonization, movements for independence, and nation-building in different Latin American countries? Be sure to clearly lay out the teaching philosophy that will guide your class, and a justification of the kinds of assignments that students would have to carry out. Include a detailed syllabus that identifies the organization of the class, and provide a clearly written explanation and justification for the choices made in the syllabus. In your explanation, make sure to answer the following questions: Why did you organize the class according to the themes and/or periods that you did? Why did you choose certain readings for students and not others? What kinds of primary source material have you included? And if no primary sources, why not? Finally, what books did you choose for your lectures, and why?

3. You are at a job interview and one of your potential future colleagues, a historian of US diplomatic history, is skeptical about the value of gender and especially women’s history for understanding US-Latin American relations during the twentieth century. Provide a resoundingly convincing argument that would dispel this historian’s doubts by drawing on and critiquing the available relevant literature.
Preliminary Examination
Women’s History
Sara Egge

Please answer two of the following questions:

1. When historians discuss the concept of “women and work” in the post Civil War period, they are generally thinking of working and middle class women pursuing paid employment in urban America. How do they cast the tensions facing these women, in terms of family life, childrearing, and household duties? Reformulate the discussion, if the group of women being studied is rural and agricultural.

2. You have been asked to teach an upper division undergraduate course on “American Women’s History.” What themes, topics and readings will you emphasize in the creation of such a course, and why?

3. Discuss the usefulness of the ubiquitous term “separate spheres” in relationship to the history of American women in the post-Civil War period. To what extent does this term explain the experience of American women? Which ones? Why?

4. In the last twenty-five years, how has the study of rural women’s history diverged from women’s history in general? What themes, issues, or concerns are central to rural women’s history, but peripheral to the larger field?
Exam questions for Madhumita Saha - September 2009
Amy Bix - History of Technology

Choose three (3) of the following questions - do not do more than three! Allot your time appropriately.

1. As you may have encountered, undergraduate students (sometimes especially engineers) often like to think of the history of technology as a simple story of progress - things just keep getting better and better over the decades. David Noble has provided one step toward challenging and complicating such assumptions of progress by asking, "Progress for whom? Progress for what?" After pursuing your readings the history of technology and in history more generally, explain how you would approach easy assumptions about technological change as a clear story of "progress." What historical examples and evidence would you use to discuss this idea in a historically-valid manner?

2. Discuss the connections between the history of technology and environmental history. What does this literature tell us about the changing historical relationship between technology and nature, at different times and places? Your answer may wish to incorporate discussions of works such as those by William Cronon, Edward Russell, Leo Marx, etc.

3. Suppose you were asked to design a course at the advanced-undergraduate level on the subject of the history of technology in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. How would you organize such a course? - what would be some of the main ideas, themes, and examples that you would emphasize? What would you want students to learn about technological history and why this subject is important? To what extent would you incorporate comparative history or non-Western history? - an if so, explain how and why.

4. You have read and thought a fair amount by now on the subject of the history of the Green Revolution, international food policy, and biotechnology. Review the literature that you have covered in this field, analyzing its strengths, its weaknesses, and what it leaves out. Discuss the ideas of critics such as Vandana Shiva and whether these criticisms are historically and intellectually valid. If not, what is more accurate and valuable way to understand the history of the Green Revolution?

REMEMBER - DO ONLY THREE OF THESE QUESTIONS, NOT ALL!
Field Examination in 19th- and 20th-century Astronomy and Astrophysics
Gary Cameron
7 April 2009

Answer FOUR of the following questions.

1. Write a comparative study of William Herschel (1738-1822) and Pierre-Simon Laplace (1749-1827) regarding their respective astronomical theories. Did their views change from about 1780 to about 1820? If so, why and how? How did things stand between them circa 1820?

2. Write an essay about these two images that defends an historical thesis regarding the history of physics and astronomy from about 1840 to about 1900. Thermodynamics and spectroscopy are two physical subjects to consider. Any others?

3. From Einstein’s point of view, explain his new physics and its relevance for understanding the astronomical universe from about 1905 to about 1935.

4. Write an historical account of the Great Debate in 1820 between Harlow Shapley (1885-1972) and Heber Curtis (1872-1942). Concentrate on the observational and theoretical (both physical and astronomical, as relevant) issues contemplated by these men – rather than on the subsequent history of the dispute.

5. How did the conceptual careers of Arthur Eddington (1882-1944) and Edwin Hubble (1889-1953) interact? To what extent were they independent of or dependent upon one another? To what extent is it correct to label Eddington the theorist and Hubble the observer?

6. Write a biography of Fred Hoyle (1915-2001), focusing on his astronomy.

Between now and the oral exam, think about the questions that you did not answer!
Comparative Rural Women’s History

One question, in two parts:

Part One:

Agency, separate spheres, mutuality, and the division of labor are all key concepts in recent writing about American rural women. Critically evaluate the use and usefulness of these terms in achieving the fullest possible understanding of rural women’s lives in the United States.

Part Two:

Using your study of women in Australia and New Zealand for comparative material, explain to what degree these concepts are applicable in the study of the history of rural women outside of the U.S.
Exam Questions for Angela Gumm

20th Century U.S. History

From Charles M. Dobbs

Answer four questions taking about one hour per question.

1. Write an essay about Progressivism. In your essay, describe the origins of the movement, its beginnings at the local level, its move to the state level and then the national level. Discuss goals and achievements, shortcomings, and lasting impact.

2. Write an essay about the 1920s in America. Popular histories talk about the so-called Roaring Twenties. What was there to the 1920s that seem to justify this view? At the same time there were real changes taking place in America’s cities and in the countryside, in politics and economics, etc. Write an essay that considers the decade perhaps from the top-down and then the bottom-up or how the two sides of the 1920s existed alongside one another.

3. Write an essay about American life in the Great Depression. First, discuss the extent of the economic impact. Then consider the harder to quantify social and personal impact of the depression. Finally, how did most Americans survive the 1930s?

4. Write an essay about America in the immediate postwar years and consider the impact of the origins of the Cold War and the beginnings of the baby boom generation. How did they affect politics, the economy, the society, and even American culture?

5. Write an essay about the 1950s in America. To some, it seemed the Eisenhower decade; that is, a decade of economic prosperity, family formation, the rise of suburbia, the spread of television, etc. But under the surface there certainly were issues and injustice in America. How would you present this decade in a one hour survey lecture in class?

6. The Vietnam War seemed to starkly divide American society across a generation and between generations; it also seemed representative of other societal divides including the Civil Rights movement, the Women’s Movement, etc. What was the impact of the Vietnam War on America in the 1960s and 1970s? How much of its impact was confined to the generation that fought the conflict and hence its impact fades each decade?
7. In 1987, 20th Century Fox released the movie, *Wall Street*, in which Michael Douglas won an Academy Award for portraying unscrupulous corporate raider Gordon Gekko. He rather famously told an audience that “greed is good.” Director Oliver Stone was obviously seeking to condemn the ethic of the era. Okay. Write an essay about life in Ronald Reagan’s America and agree or disagree with Stone and back up your argument.

8. The past quarter century has witnessed dramatic changes in the United States, including [but not limited to] the erosion of the manufacturing base and the decline of unions in those industries, the rise of a lower-paid service industry, population movements toward the south and southwest and a gentle depopulating of the Midwest, the recognition of the power if not the rise to power of the Christian Right in politics, etc. Write about essay about the last twenty-five years of the 20th century. Did America change? How? Its impact on young people, on families, on community structures, etc.
Environmental History

Answer two of the following questions:

1. Environmental history is a relatively new field of historical endeavor. Please write a brief historiography of the field, examining its trajectory over time.

2. If you were teaching an environmental history class, what would that class look like? What major themes and issues would you develop? What major readings would you assign? Explain your approach.

3. As an historian of garbage, how would you teach a class on that subject? How would you tie it into larger themes in environmental history? What major readings would you assign? How would you justify such a course to your skeptical colleagues?
US to 1865

Part I. Please answer one of the following questions.

1) Please discuss the main political, cultural, and economic developments in British North America between 1607 and 1775. Be sure to discuss variations and similarities by region. Outline and assess the different ways in which historians have interpreted these developments.

2) Please outline the main political, cultural, and economic developments in the United States between 1775 and 1815. During the course of your discussion, be sure to outline and assess the changing ways historians have interpreted the American Revolution, the drafting and ratification of the Constitution, and the rise of the Jeffersonian Republican party.

Part II. Please answer one of the following questions.

3) Historians have described the period between 1815 and 1848 in American history as the “Age of Jackson” or the period of “Jacksonian Democracy.” Please assess the case for considered the period under this rubric and also assess the reasons historians have argued against this interpretive framework. Which do you find most persuasive? Be sure to reference political, social, economic, and cultural developments from the period in the course of your answer.

4) Describe the origins, progress, and outcomes of the American Civil War. Be sure to discuss the different ways in which historians have interpreted the causes of the Civil War. Please also describe the changing ways historians have interpreted Reconstruction. In the course of your answer, based on your reading of the historical record and historians' readings of it, please identify what you believe to be point of no return in the coming of the Civil War and the turning point of the Civil War.
Exam questions: Gary Cameron – April 2009
Amy Bix – History of Technology

Choose three (3) of the following questions – do not do more than three! Allot your time appropriately.

1. In *Technology in America*, Marcus and Segal set out a clear framework for explaining how patterns in the relationship between technology and culture changed during the twentieth century. Summarize their approach to 20thC technological history, and compare and contrast their perspective to that of other historians of technology whom you have read (such as Ruth Cowan and Carroll Pursell).

2. You have read a number of books about the history of invention and about “great” inventors, such as Edison and the Wright brothers. Discuss the literature on the history of invention; where does innovation come from, and what factors help determine whether or nor an invention actually becomes a commercial and popularly-accepted success?

3. Suppose you were asked to design a course at the advanced-undergraduate level on the subject of the history of technology in the United States from about 1812 to 1915. How would you organize such a course? – what would be some of the main ideas, themes, and examples that you would emphasize? What would you want students to learn about this part of American technological history and why this subject is important?

4. Compare and contrast the ideas in John Kasson’s *Civilizing the Machine*; Leo Marx’s *Machine in the Garden*; and David Nye’s *American Technological Sublime*. Explain which arguments you find most powerful for thinking about the nature and evolution of American ideas about technology.

5. You have read and thought a significant amount by now about the history of science and technology popularization – ham radio, telescopes, electric gadgets, other instruments, etc. Discuss the literature on science and technology popularization and review some of the relevant authors’ main theses. What do you feel are the most significant questions surrounding the history of science and technology popularization, especially with reference to how it fits into the bigger history of science and technology?

REMEMBER – DO ONLY THREE OF THESE QUESTIONS, NOT ALL!
Exam questions for Kaya Tolon - January 2009
Amy Bix - History of Technology

Choose three (3) of the following questions - do not do more than three! Allot your time appropriately.

1. As you may have encountered, undergraduate students (sometimes especially engineers) often like to think of the history of technology as a simple story of progress - things just keep getting better and better over the decades. David Noble has provided one step toward challenging and complicating such assumptions of progress by asking, "Progress for whom? Progress for what?" After pursuing your readings in the history of technology and in history more generally, explain how you would approach easy assumptions about technological change as a clear story of "progress." What historical examples and evidence would you use to discuss this idea in a historically-valid manner?

2. Discuss the history of technology during the Cold War years - how would you explain the relationship between the history of technology and the political, military, and economic/social context of the Cold War period? Discuss what you find most significant in this history, and explain why general historians of the Cold War period should take technological history into account when considering this period. How does the history of technology in the Cold War period fit into a larger narrative about the history of technology in the twentieth-century United States?

3. Suppose you were asked to design a course at the advanced-undergraduate level on the subject of the history of technology in the United States in the nineteenth-century. How would you organize such a course? - what would be some of the main ideas, themes, and examples that you would emphasize? What would you want students to learn about 19thC American technological history and why this subject is important?

4. You have read and thought a fair amount by now on the subject of the history of engineering, as an intellectual, social/cultural, business, professional, and political discipline. Discuss how the practice and the profession of engineering have developed and changed since the 1800s, in dialogue with the broader historical context. You may wish to give some examples, for instance, from the modern history of computer engineering.

REMEMBER - DO ONLY THREE OF THESE QUESTIONS, NOT ALL!
Field Examination in the History of Science - Answer FOUR of the following questions with choices as indicated.

Answer question 1.

1. Significance of Aristotle in the History of Science from Thales to Galen & Ptolemy

Answer either question 2 or 3.

2. Arguably, the so-called Scientific Revolution was neither very scientific nor very revolutionary. From the birth of Copernicus to the death of Newton was more than two centuries. Can a change that took so long really be called "revolutionary"? And even at the end of that period, Newton's interest in alchemy and God's role in the universe may not seem truly "scientific."

In an undergraduate survey course, would you employ the term "Scientific Revolution"? If so, how would you justify yourself, given the above consideration? If not, how would you justify yourself, given that the undergraduates may well be expecting to hear about this famous "revolution"?

3. Why and how did Newton disagree with Descartes? Be sure to give a thorough discussion of both men's ideas in order to make your answer understandable.

Answer either question 4, 5, or 6.

4. Write a history of chemistry from about 1750 to about 1850, emphasizing the chemical theories of either Lavoisier or Dalton. That is explain in some detail the ideas of one man or the other and place that thought in the context of a century of chemistry.

5. Write a history of biology (except for evolution) from about 1800 to about 1950, explaining which themes you would emphasize and which you would de-emphasize in an undergraduate survey course, and why you would do so.

6. Write a history of physics from about 1800 to about 1930, explaining which themes you would emphasize and you would de-emphasize in an undergraduate survey course, and why you would do so.

Answer either question 7, 8, or 9.

7. Write a comparative study of meteorology in the nineteenth-century Britain and America. Were they exactly the same, for example, or was there some kind of geographical separation of ideas? What, if any, new ideas were there?

8. Write a comparative analysis of Cambridge Companions to Galileo and Darwin. Do they differ in the scope of their treatments, from social contexts to technical scientific details? Do they claim to present a new Galileo or Darwin or just summarize long-standing views?

9. Give a thorough explanation of Thomas Kuhn's theory of paradigm shifts. What is his main historical evidence? How does historical research in the decades after his book's publication strengthen or weaken his argument with regard to that evidence? What is your current evaluation of Kuhn's argument?

Between now and the oral exam, think about the questions that you did not answer!
Cold War Forecasting Field

Answer any four:

1.) Write a history of game theory's development from the 1940s to the present. What institutional sponsorship did it garner in military and civilian sectors, and why? What changes did the work of John Forbes force on the field? Explain briefly the various varieties of game in the Cold War era.

2.) Discuss the origins and development of future forecasting in the Cold War era. Note variations in approach and method, and discuss their roots in science and social science.

3.) Discuss the development of modern statistics as a branch of applied mathematics in social science, in the physical sciences, the medical and the agricultural fields, since about 1930, noting changes and variations from field to field. What difference, if any, did the Cold War make on these branches of statistics? What differences, if any, have the development of the personal computer made in the history of recent statistics?

4.) What was MAD (mutual assured destruction) and how did it emerge as atomic strategy after World War Two? And what was the Soviet response?

5.) Design a course for undergraduate or graduate students (or both) in the history of the Cold War, from any national or regional or global perspective you wish, noting in particular how and why it developed. Tell us approximately what kinds of lectures and discussions you would have, a list of readings. What would be your course objectives? Has the Cold War truly ended?
1. A variety of European historians have explained the rise of Fascism, and therefore totalitarianism in the twentieth century, in different socio-political contexts in different ways. Some explain fascism as an ideology (rather than a social movement), while others focus on the economic preludes to totalitarianism. Using a variety of case studies you have read widely, explain these interpretive frameworks and what they tell us about unique national settings as well as pan-European movements politically.

2. Stephen Kotkin, in his monumental study of Magnitogorsk, has argued that methodologically one must steer a course midway between the old totalitarian school of Sovietology and the new social revisionists. Did he successfully accomplish this in his work? Explain the benefits and pitfalls of Kotkin’s approach that borrowed from Foucault’s analytical methods. Why are others, such as Sheila Fitzpatrick, more interested in how everyday Russians worked the system from below for their own gain? Ultimately, therefore, how do new cultural historians of Russia highlight social movements, and the practices of everyday life, in a rigid political system so dominated by the state?

3. Examining popular culture and public opinion in 20th century Russia is certainly a daunting task. However, some historians (Davies, Stites, Bonnell, Fitzpatrick) – to name a few you have read – have outlined new ways to understand the role of dissent & public opinion, popular entertainment, and identity & imposture. Explain the value of these new studies in widening our understanding of Soviet society and culture.
Part 1:
Answer two of the following three questions:

1. To what extent can the cultural Renaissance of the Greek Archaic period be attributed to rural as opposed to urban factors?

2. Plutarch ascribed the legislative program of the Gracchi, in part, to the rise of large, slave-run estates in Italy and the decline of the free rural poor. Has recent work supported this assessment of rural Italy in the period following the second Puni War?

3. How were large estates run in the late Republic and Early Empire and what were the primary goals of their owners?

Part 2:
Answer One of the following two questions:

1. Methodologically, how has the study of Roman agriculture changed since the publication of White’s *Roman Farming* in 1970?

2. To what extent, if any, does Horden and Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea* represent real progress in the study of ancient Mediterranean agriculture and rural life?
Preliminary Examination, Field Three, Comparative
Rural Socioeconomic Transformation in the United States and Latin America
Pamela Riney-Kehrberg and Patrick Barr-Melej, examiners.

Please write answers to two of the following questions. You may allocate your time in any way you please, but take no more than four hours to complete this examination.

1. Compare and contrast recent trends in the rural historiographies of Latin America and the U.S. In other words: Why don’t we use such terms as ‘subalternity’ or ‘post-colonialism’ when talking about the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and instead focus upon terms such as family, community, commercialization and the market?

2. The twentieth century has seen the rise of rural social and political movements in both Latin America and the U.S. Choose two of these movements (one in the U.S. and one in Latin America) and trace their origins, trajectories, and outcomes during the first half of the twentieth century. Make appropriate comparisons.

3. Characterize and compare rural life in one U.S. region with that in one Latin American region in the period between 1850 and 1900. Imagine the larger dimensions of that life (economically, socially, politically), and what it looked like.
Exam Questions -- Classical Greece/Ancient Ag: Minor
Robert Welch
November 2007

Answer two of the following:
1. Do the manuals of Cato, Varro and Columella provide adequate evidence for the practice of agriculture in the late Republic and early Empire? In what ways are they deficient?

2. How did Mediterranean food production strategies change in response to the growth of the Roman Empire?

3. What sorts of evidence survive concerning rural life in Archaic Greece and what are the main drawbacks associated with their use?

4. Plutarch ascribed the legislative program of the Gracchi, in part, to the rise of large, slave-run estates in Italy and the decline of the free rural poor. Has recent work supported this assessment of rural Italy in the period following the second Punic War?

Answer one of the following:
1. To what extent does Horden & Purcells The Corrupting Sea represent a watershed in the study of classical agricultural?

2. In The Other Greeks Victor Davis Hanson assigns a crucial role in the cultural transformation of the polis period to small landowners. Is this view justified?

3. What have been the most significant methodological advances in the study of the Roman countryside in the past twenty years?
Exam Questions – Post-Civil War America
Robert Welch
November 2007

Answer two of the following questions:

1. Family, community, commercialization and the market are all key concepts in recent writing about American farmers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Critically evaluate the use and usefulness of these terms in achieving the fullest possible understanding of rural life during that period of American history.

2. Historical textbooks generally designate the Compromise of 1877 as the “end of Reconstruction.” Is this a valid designation? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of this historical interpretation? What are other possible historical landmarks for the end of Reconstruction and explain why.

3. The Great Depression and New Deal enabled fundamental change in agricultural and rural life. What was the intent of this policy? Describe and analyze the programs that directly or indirectly affected agriculture and rural life. Do they fit a consistent pattern or were there contradictions and friction points? Was New Deal agricultural policy a success or failure?

4. Account for the depopulation of the agricultural countryside from the Great Depression to the present.
Exam Questions – Early America
Robert Welch
November 2007

Part I

**Answer one of the following questions.**

1. In recent decades, some historians have suggested considering the American Revolution as a conservative social movement – an event that sought more to preserve than to alter the existing social order. The inter-related concepts of Republicanism and Civic Humanism represent fundamental components of this historiographical revision. Discuss the strengths and weakness of the “Republican synthesis” as an interpretive model for understanding the significance of the American Revolution. Provide some tangible historical examples of these strengths and weaknesses (i.e. the Stamp Act) and explain why you do or why you do not subscribe to this historiographical interpretation.

2. Discuss the origins and developments of the debate over public land policy during the last decades of the eighteenth century. What circumstances and events informed these debates and their resolution? What were some of the intentions of the land policy that emerged from the American Revolution? What were some of its consequences? How have different historians interpreted this policy?

Part II

**Answer one of the following questions.**

1. Some historians have posed the concept of a “Market Revolution” to explain the disruption of traditional forms of household relations by new social forces during the nineteenth-century. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of this historiographical interpretation and explain why you do or do not subscribe to it. Provide some tangible historical examples of events and issues that substantiate or criticize the notion of a “Market Revolution.”

2. Much of the sectional crisis concerned the question of the legitimacy of slavery in the territories. Discuss the debate over whether or not the Federal Government could legislate on slavery in the territories. What options were considered to resolve this intractable question and how did these various options fare? How did the issues of the debate change between 1846 and 1858? How have historians evaluated these changes?
Statement of the Question: In William Hinton's magisterial study of agrarian reform in a peasant village by the Chinese Communists, he introduces his subject by suggesting that agrarian reform was not a unique phenomena among Chinese peasant farmers but, rather, that it is an issue for the entire world. Indeed, for the past three centuries a revolution in agriculture has necessarily paralleled the Industrial Revolution and enabled fewer and fewer "tillers of the soil" to support larger and larger urban populations. Arguably then, as Hinton suggests, all modern industrializing societies have faced (or will face) the question of how to transform agricultural practices from subsistence to sustainable levels. Often appearing under the guise of various names (i.e. scientific agriculture, book farming, collectivization, modernization, or agricultural development) most of these "progressive" reforms shared a common goal of improving the efficiency of agricultural techniques in order to increase agricultural production. But, arguably, both the experiences and the consequences of these reforms varied considerably depending upon their specific historical context. Examine the potential fruitfulness and limitations of Hinton's observation by responding to the four component questions listed below.

A. Discuss the intellectual origins of "progressive" agricultural reform movements in the industrializing western nations of the "long" nineteenth-century (1783-1914). What were the goals of these movements and what were their consequences?

B. Summarize the history of agrarian reforms in the United States from the early national period up until the time of the Second World War. Identify some of the key issues and movements that characterized this larger historical narrative.

C. Compare and contrast the experiences of agrarian reform in the United States with those of Mexico during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Explore possible explanations of why divergent results may have occurred and offer a conclusion of your own that is grounded in the historical evidence.

D. And finally, as a means of assessing the fruitfulness and limitations of Hinton's observation, comment on the potential of considering agrarian reforms in a comparative historical framework. Provide some examples of the strengths and weaknesses of such a conceptual model for historians.
Exam questions for Jenny Barker-Devine:
History of Women and Work

Choose four of the following questions to answer - do only 4...

1. Explain how issues of race have affected the history of US women and paid employment; compare the patterns of work for white women and African-American women. How does this fit in with the broader history of race in America?

2. How did the US feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s address questions relating to women's employment? What were the specific concerns that feminists raised, what approach did they take to address these issues, and what solutions did they aim for?

3. What happened with women and employment in the US during WWI and WWII? What changes occurred and why, and what were the limits on those changes? How does this history fit in with the broader history of WWI and WWII, and what happened to working women when these wars ended?

4. Compare and contrast the conditions of women's work in the US in the 1910s, 1930s, 1950s, and 1990s. What had changed and why? What had not changed? Your answer should cover issues such as working hours, wages, working conditions, patterns of hiring, etc.

5. How does the history of women's paid employment in America during the 20th century relate to the history of family life, childrearing, and household duties? What changed in these areas and how do these changes relate to each other? What parts of this history did not change?
Please answer TWO of the following questions.

1. While agricultural history has been defined succinctly (by students in the AHRS program) as "cows and plows," rural history has been defined as "kitchens and kids." To what degree do these characterizations adequately explain the historiography and shape of agricultural and rural history at the dawn of the 21st century? Does this dichotomy continue to be appropriate?

2. In the last twenty-five years, how has the study of rural women's history diverged from women's history in general? What themes, issues, or concerns are central to rural women's history, but peripheral to the larger field?

3. Family, community, commercialization and the market are all key concepts in recent writing about American farmers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Critically evaluate the use and usefulness of these terms in achieving the fullest possible understanding of rural life during that period of American history.

4. Discuss the major changes in American agricultural and rural life during the twentieth century. How has technology, science, and government policy affected farming and rural life? What have been the most important developments? Why?

5. The Great Depression and New Deal enabled fundamental change in agricultural and rural life. What was the intent of this policy? Describe and analyze the programs that directly or indirectly affected agriculture and rural life. Do they fit a consistent pattern or were there contradictions and friction points? Was New Deal agricultural policy a success or failure?
Please answer 4 of the following questions:

1. At what point did the American colonies' decision for independence become an inevitable one?

2. During the first half of the nineteenth century, economists say that the South grew but did not develop. What is meant by this statement, and to what degree is it true?

3. Frederick Jackson Turner argued that the frontier experience largely created American society. His critics counter with the argument that Europeans coming to America, as well as those moving west later, mostly wanted to recreate old social patterns in new places. To which (if either) position do you subscribe, and why?

4. Explain the importance of both immigration and migration to the story of American urbanization in the period from 1850 to 1920.

5. Historical textbooks generally designate the Compromise of 1877 as the "end of Reconstruction." Is this a valid designation? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of this historical interpretation? What are other possible historical landmarks for the end of Reconstruction and explain why.

6. "If you see somebody winning all the time, he isn't gambling, he's cheating. It's like the Negro in America seeing the white man win all the time. He has all the cards and the odds stacked on his side and he has always dealt to our people from the bottom of the deck." Malcolm X

Support, refute, or modify this statement, discussing the role of African Americans in American society since 1865. Be sure to consider legislation, the courts, economic opportunity, and social activism.

7. How did the American definition of "national interest" grow in the U.S. global dealings with other nations from 1898 to 1945? How did this affect the nature and level of American involvement in world affairs?

8. Account for the depopulation of the agricultural countryside from the Great Depression to the present.
Exam Question:
Comparative Agrarian Reforms
(Jenny Barker-Devine Spring 2005)

Statement of the Question: In William Hinton’s magisterial study of agrarian reform in a peasant village by the Chinese Communists, he introduces his subject by suggesting that agrarian reform was not a unique phenomena among Chinese peasant farmers but, rather, that it is an issue for the entire world. Indeed, for the past three centuries a revolution in agriculture has necessarily paralleled the Industrial Revolution and enabled fewer and fewer “tillers of the soil” to support larger and larger urban populations. Arguably then, as Hinton suggests, all modern industrializing societies have faced (or will face) the question of how to transform agricultural practices from subsistence to sustainable levels. Often appearing under the guise of various names (i.e. scientific agriculture, book farming, collectivization, modernization, or agricultural development) most of these “progressive” reforms shared a common goal of improving the efficiency of agricultural techniques in order to increase agricultural production. But, arguably, both the experiences and the consequences of these reforms varied considerably depending upon their specific historical context. Examine the potential fruitfulness and limitations of Hinton’s observation by responding to the four component questions listed below.

A. Discuss the intellectual origins of “progressive” agricultural reform movements in the industrializing western nations of the “long” nineteenth-century (1783-1914). What were the goals of these movements and what were their consequences?

B. Summarize the history of agrarian reforms in the United States from the early national period up until the time of the Second World War. Identify some of the key issues and movements that characterized this larger historical narrative.

C. Compare and contrast the experiences of agrarian reform in the United States with those of Mexico during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Explore possible explanations of why divergent results may have occurred and offer a conclusion of your own that is grounded in the historical evidence.

D. And finally, as a means of assessing the fruitfulness and limitations of Hinton’s observation, comment on the potential of considering agrarian reforms in a comparative historical framework. Provide some examples of the strengths and weaknesses of such a conceptual model for historians.