Minor Field Preliminary Exam
African History
April 2011

Please choose three questions from the following list of seven. Be sure your essays have a clear line of argument and engage with both history and historiography, discussing both scholars and scholarly work where appropriate.

1. What are the main contributions that historians of gender have brought to the study of African history since the 1990s?

2. To what extent did formal higher education institutions in 19th and 20th century colonial Africa reflect indigenous experience?

3. In relation to developments in oral history, is the field of social history of Africa alive and well?

4. “African modernity, as a historiographical concept, is indelibly marked by its association with the flawed concept of 'the traditional' and thus has limited usefulness.” Discuss.

5. Histories of Islam in Africa are generally separate, both conceptually and geographically, from histories of Africa in regions where Christianity dominated. Outline the main points of convergence and divergence between these two historiographies. Can they be brought together productively?

6. To what extent was slavery in Africa an institution of economic conflict or one of cultural assimilation? What is at stake in the historiography of this controversial subject?

7. To what extent was ethnicity in Africa a colonial-era invention? Discuss with relation to those actors most involved in the construction of ethnicity.