Directions: Answer one question from Part I and two questions from Part II. You must do a total of three (3) questions. Each of your essays should include both a discussion of the history (content) and historiography. Your historiographical discussion may include assessments of the literature and preferably include titles and publication dates in parenthesis. Be sure each essay has a clear line of argument, addresses as many dimensions of the question as possible, and offers relevant, persuasive evidence from specific secondary sources wherever appropriate.

Before you begin writing, you may want to take a moment to think about your essay and outline your answer. Good luck!

Part I. Answer one question from Part I

1. Scholars of Atlantic World slavery have offered opposing explanations for the early genesis of slave identity formation in the Americas—arguing that either the retention of African cultural experiences or their rupture contributed to cultural production, patterns of resistance, and the development of local plantation economies. Outline the evidence, arguments, and methodologies that support each position. What are the distinctions and similarities in position, and what are the historiographical stakes and scholarly limitations of each?

2. The perspectives and experiences of African American women both challenge and complement dominant scholarly narratives of Black resistance and freedom struggles in America from the era of slavery to the present. How have historians begun to capture and incorporate these women’s relationship to the formation of family, sexuality, labor, and leadership? How does their attention to the gendered dimensions of resistance illuminate the evolution of the field of African American history? Your answer should be comprehensive and include examples from early Atlantic and antebellum era of slavery, and beyond. Finally, what are the strengths of the existing literature and what remains to be studied?

3. Since the publication of Winthrop D. Jordan’s *White Over Black* in 1968, historians have debated whether racism preceded slavery, did slavery precede racism, or did both develop simultaneously mutually reinforcing each other. At least two bodies of literature have compellingly addressed the consolidation of racial slavery and white supremacy in British North America. One (Theodore Allen, T.H. Breen, Edmund Morgan and Lerone Bennett, for example) emphasizes class as a determinative factor while another stresses the importance of ancient Christian views of blackness and of preceding British racial attitudes (Jordan and Betty Wood). Recently scholars have begun to explore the role gender played in the transition from African indentured servitude, or an unspecified status to enslavement (Jennifer Morgan and Kathleen Brown). What is the distinctive contribution of each approach? How might the class, race, and
gender interpretations of slavery’s development be reconstructed into a new unitary explanation?

Part II: Please answer two of the three questions below.

1. You have recently been hired at Research I university and asked to create a graduate seminar on the modern African American liberation movement. Provide a detailed discussion of how you would develop this syllabus. Keep in mind that it represents your knowledge of dominant paradigms, major theoretical and methodological disputes, seminal and recent debates, key concepts, as well as critical moments in the history of modern African American social movements. So, be sure in your rationale for the course to critically assess recent trends (e.g., locality, women and gender, Black class relations, the focus on northern struggles, etc.) in the scholarship of modern Black social movements. Therefore, provide a rationale for how you would structure the course, i.e., chronologically or/and thematically. Drawing from both seminal and recent works, explain the selection of particular texts that you would use (you must select a minimum of 10 texts and 10 articles), and offer examples of two assignments you would give.

2. Provide a comprehensive discussion of your proposed dissertation project, and the multiple ways in which it potentially contributes to the extant scholarship on African Americans in Atlanta and Black urban history. Be sure to provide an overview of the state of the literature in this area.

3. Divide the African American experience into historical periods and discuss the historical development of African Americans from the 17th Century to the first decade of the 21st. Your discussion should highlight major themes such as Black agency, women and gender, and community building. To distinguish agency from community building, you should stress resistance to racial oppression during your discussion. Also, it is important that you identify the role of violence in the black community, you should specifically tease out the particularities of individual, structural, and resistance-based violence throughout African-American history. Be sure to identify and explore major watershed events and historical turning points (e.g., from slavery to freedom) through which African American history transitions and/or transforms from one moment or historical period to another.