Ph.D. Preliminary Examination

Part 1. Late Imperial China

Please write on two of the following questions.

1. Recently, a fast growing body of scholarship has opened new vistas in the study of the history of printing and book culture in late imperial China. Please discuss the major issues raised in these works with regard to the question of the impact of print culture on literary production, women’s culture, politics, and identity formation.

2. “New Qing History,” a new wave of historical studies has emerged as a new paradigm for the study of the Qing Empire in the last two decades. In what way does this body of scholarship challenge previous works in its representation of the history of the Manchus in relation to the achievements and failings of the Qing Empire? Please discuss and evaluate debates over critical issues and approaches that define this “school” of Qing historians? It is important to make reference to the major works exemplary of this new scholarship.

3. “Chinese law has been historically exclusively penal and associated with criminal sanctions.” Please evaluate this statement in terms of recent scholarship on the legal history of China, with special attention to the discordance between legal discourse and legal practice in the Qing Empire under the Manchu rule. Please discuss the major debates by referring to recent works on Qing law and legal culture, including but not limited to the works by Philip Huang, Teemu Ruskola, William Alford, and Jerome Bourgon.

Part 2. Modern China

Please answer both questions with evidences and conceptual tools drawn from readings on the subjects.

1. Chinese historical scholarship after the 1990s has increasingly emphasized the systematic continuity instead of radical break of Chinese culture and society. They have challenged the previous emphases of, for example, 1840 and 1949 as the paradigmatic markers of China’s struggle to break away from the tradition to achieve modernity and international recognition. Please discuss this historiographical shift.

2. Imagine you are teaching a graduate seminar introducing new students to the study of Chinese history and historiography. Which five to six books will you suggest to your students that in your opinion have influenced and shaped the scholarship on China since the Ming-Qing transition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and explain why.