PH.D. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

Field: Colonial Latin America and Atlantic World

September 2015

Answer three of the following five questions:

1. To which degree and in which way did pre-hispanic social, cultural, religious, political and economic practices and norms shape and influence Latin America’s post-conquest societies and cultures? What conceptual approaches have been used to tackle this central issue? Does it make a difference whether we talk about 1550 or 1800? Be sure to discuss this issue for at least three core and peripheral regions, and present specific evidence for your assertions. What variables best explain divergent developments regarding the impact of pre-Hispanic politico-cultural matrixes during the post-conquest centuries?

2. Historians have provided various explanations for the peculiar shape and development of Latin American economies during the colonial era. Different conceptual approaches have been used to explain these developments, from cultural, to institutional, structuralist economic, and various types of Marxist explanations.

Your answer should consist of two parts: First outline some of the major interpretations of Latin American colonial economies over the past fifty years. Secondly, provide a brief interpretive overview of how you yourself would approach colonial Latin American economies, addressing major variables such as markets (and other forms of exchange), prices, labor regimes, productivity, capital, ownership structures, and the role of the state (crown). Be sure to differentiate between various phases of the colonial regime, and between at least three different regional economies.

3. Discuss the historiography on “mestizaje” from the 1960s (Magnus Mörner and post-WWII social anthropology) to the present (Martinez, Cope, et al.). What do we understand better through the newer literature, and what issues/dimensions have slipped from our view through those shifts? How would you approach the study and discussion of mestizaje?

4. How did economic cycles shape the history of colonial Brazil?

5. Iberian colonialism in Latin America lasted more than three centuries largely without the support of standing armies. What factors contributed to this continuity? And what factors shaped the eventual rupture?