Spring 2013
Colonialism/Postcolonialism Preliminary Examination

This examination has one required essay. You must also choose 2 others, as directed below. Be sure to make a clear argument, support it with evidence and address the full scope of each question. Good luck!

A. The Pacific and the Postcolonial (required question)

To think postcolonial studies and Pacific studies together is, arguably, to conjure a Venn Diagram (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venn_diagram) with shared sets and subsets and big spaces that never touch as well. What is the historical relationship between these two fields? Do they come out of similar intellectual moments and/or political trajectories? Where do they converge and where is there friction? What if, any, should the postcolonial studies and/or theory agenda for that bundle of things nominated as the Pacific be? Methodologically, discursively, linguistically, spatially – how is postcolonial studies and theory transformed, in turn, by engaging with the question of the Pacific?

B. Colonial/Postcolonial Histories and Methods (Please choose two (2) of the following)

1. How do various kinds of “border-crossing” paradigms, from translation and travel to conquest, colonial encounter, and transnationalism (select three of these to discuss) transform the study of resistance, or more broadly, of counter-hegemonic formations in the Pacific?

2. Based on your knowledge of pacific colonial histories, assess the reach of modern empires on native societies. Where do histories of empire leave off and those of indigenous peoples begin? How does one do imperial history without reproducing colonial forms of knowledge? To what extent are conquest, occupation, colonial "reform" and its cultural practices the result of colonizers' work and resistance or conformity by "natives"? Can we appreciate empire or native pasts without historicizing those relationships jointly, in tandem, as entangled histories?

3. (Why) is the body a useful method, if not an imperative, for writing histories of food and foodways in the post/colonial pacific?

4. Does the “nation” remain viable as an analytical category in the wake of recent studies of the Pacific and your own reading of the theoretical literature? If it remains a compelling analytic, provide an account of how a more expansive view of the nation helps scholars today to envision issues of pressing concern, such as colonialism, post-colonialism, claims to indigeneity, nation-state building, and confederation? (Select three of these to discuss.) If not, explain the empirical and theoretical developments that no longer make it viable and the new modes of analysis that must necessarily supplant it.