Instructions: Please answer one question from each of the following three categories (for a total of three answers). Each of your answers should include a discussion of the relevant historiography.

Category I:
A. Write a critical, interpretative historiography of the idea of the Enlightenment from the late eighteenth century to the present, i.e., from Immanuel Kant to Jonathan Israel and his critics. How have the major authors viewed the Enlightenment, and why do they think the Enlightenment matters? Where do you stand on these matters?

B. Is the term “Counter-Enlightenment” a useful description of a cohesive movement, or a polemical term wielded against critics of the Enlightenment? Do those associated with “Counter-Enlightenment” have valid criticisms of the Enlightenment, or are their own ideas largely a destructive response to modernity? Discuss the place of these questions in recent historiography.

Category II:
A. Cabarets, jazz music, city nightlife, emancipated women, and avant-garde film and theater: these are part of the popular, colorful image of society and culture during Germany’s Weimar period. But was there also such a thing as “Weimar thought?” If so, what was it, who did it include, and what unified the intellectual life of interwar Germany?

B. How does violence emerge as a theme in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century thought? Which individuals and movements take it up, and how are they regarded in the historiography? Concentrate your answer on the period between the fin de siècle and the Nazi seizure of power, although you may extend your answer forward and backward in time.

Category III:
A. What is intellectual history? What subjects does it include, how can it best be written, and using what methods? Write an essay about how these questions have been answered during the past 50 years by the most important commentators on the subject.

B. Fascism has been an object of study and debate almost since its inception. Describe the different schools of thought on fascism that have arisen both before and after 1945.